

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

A processing system has an instruction pipeline (30) and a processor core. An instruction translator (42) for translating non-native instructions into native instruction operations is provided within the instruction pipeline downstream of the fetch stage (32). The instruction translator is able to generate multiple step sequences of native instruction operations in a manner that allows variable length native instruction operations sequences to be generated to emulate non-native instructions. The fetch stage is provided with a word buffer (62) that stores both a current instruction word and a next instruction word. Accordingly, variable length non-native instructions that span between instruction words read from the memory may be provided for immediate decode and multiple power consuming memory fetch avoided.

[Figure 3]